

UBC's Accessibility and Support for Disabled Instructors Survey 2021

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Background

Part of a larger project funded by the Equity & Inclusion Office
(September 2020- August 2021)

- **Annotated bibliography** on teaching and learning with disabilities/illnesses & ableism in university
- A UBC-wide **survey**
- **Consultations** with 6 disabled instructors at UBC about challenges and best practices in the context of teaching
- This **workshop!**

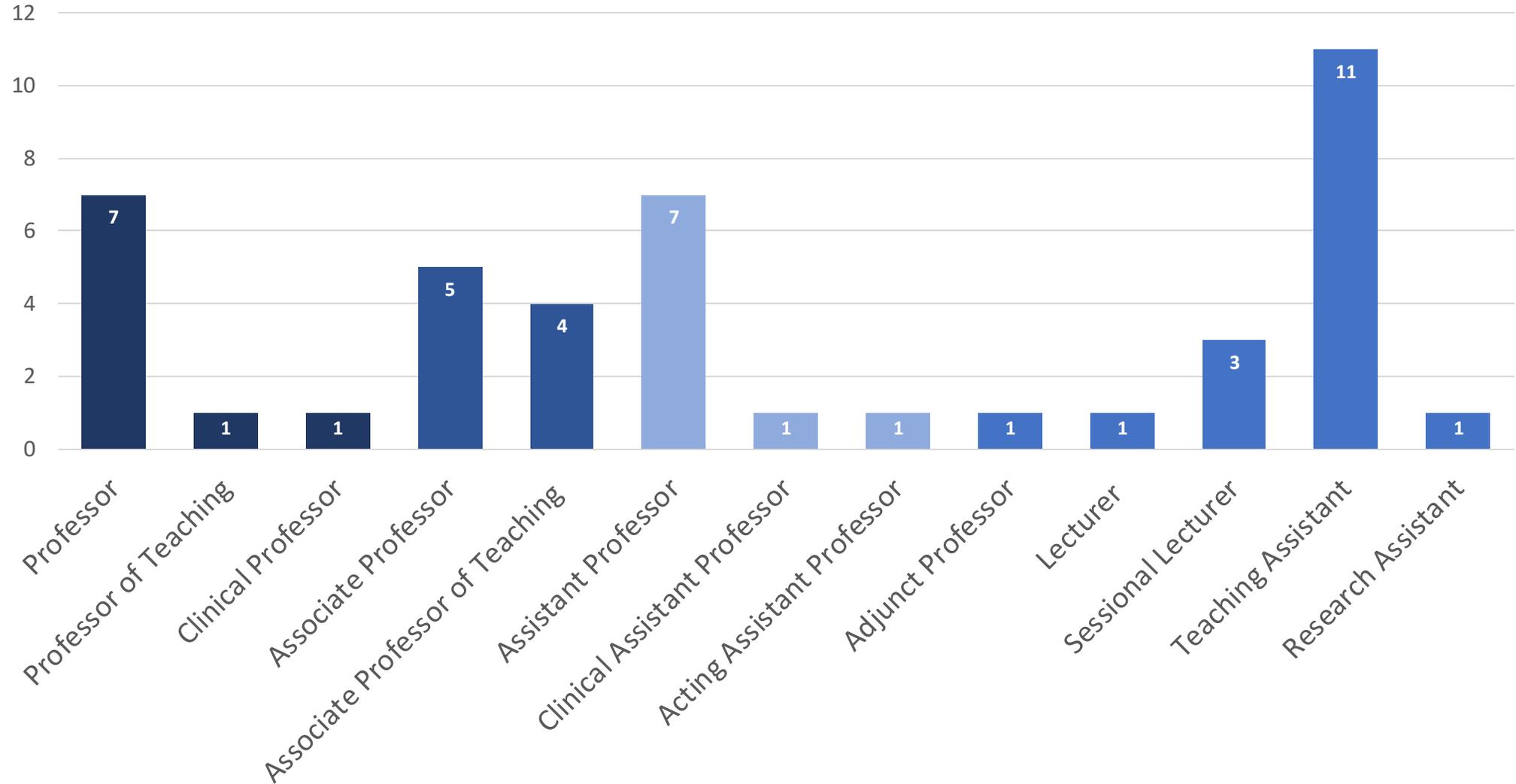
About Survey

- Conducted in March 2021
- 44 valid responses from those who identify themselves as disabled

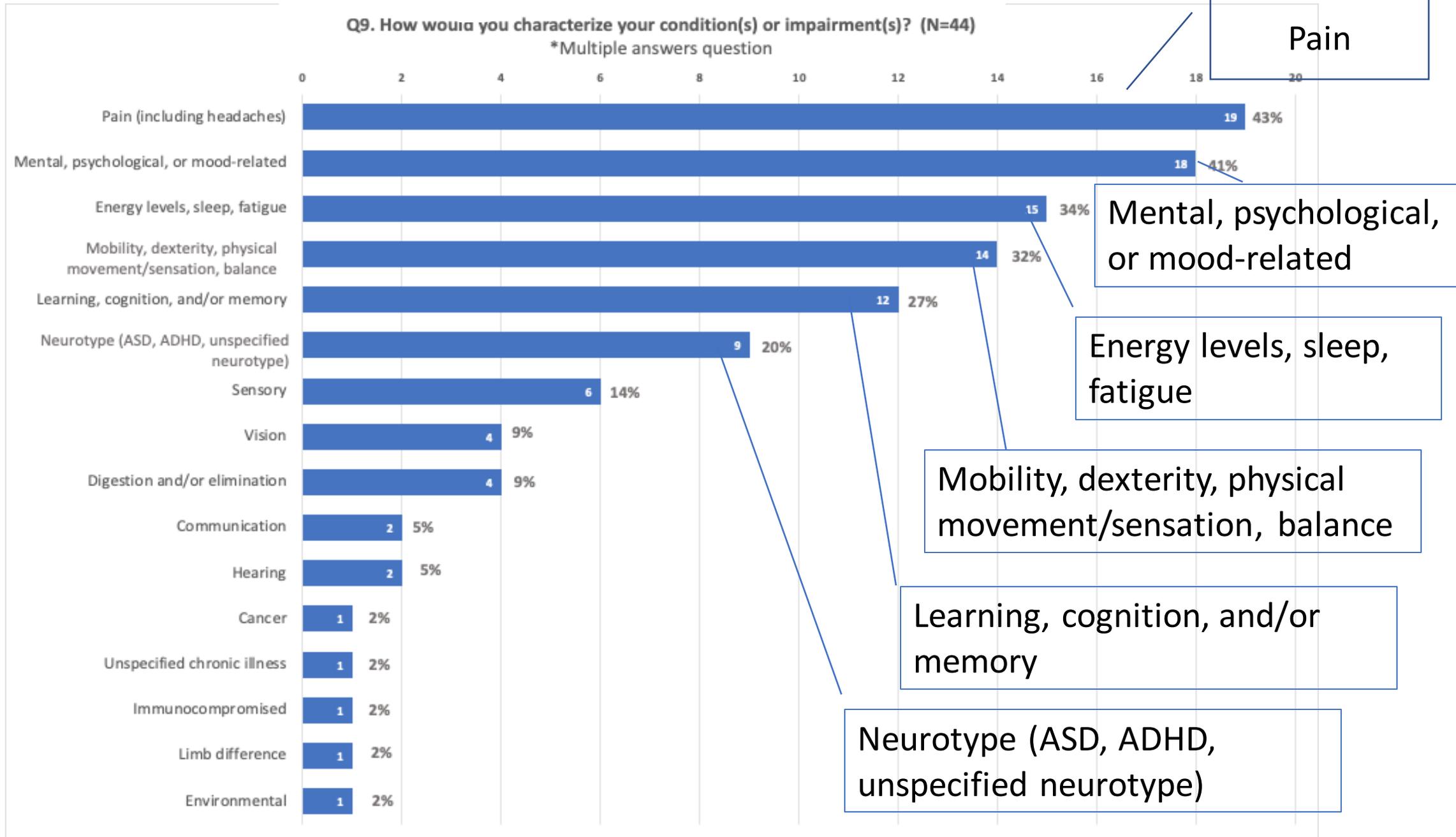
Areas of Inquiry

- Who UBC's disabled instructors are
- Disclosure
- Challenges in the context of teaching
- Instructional support
- Professional development support

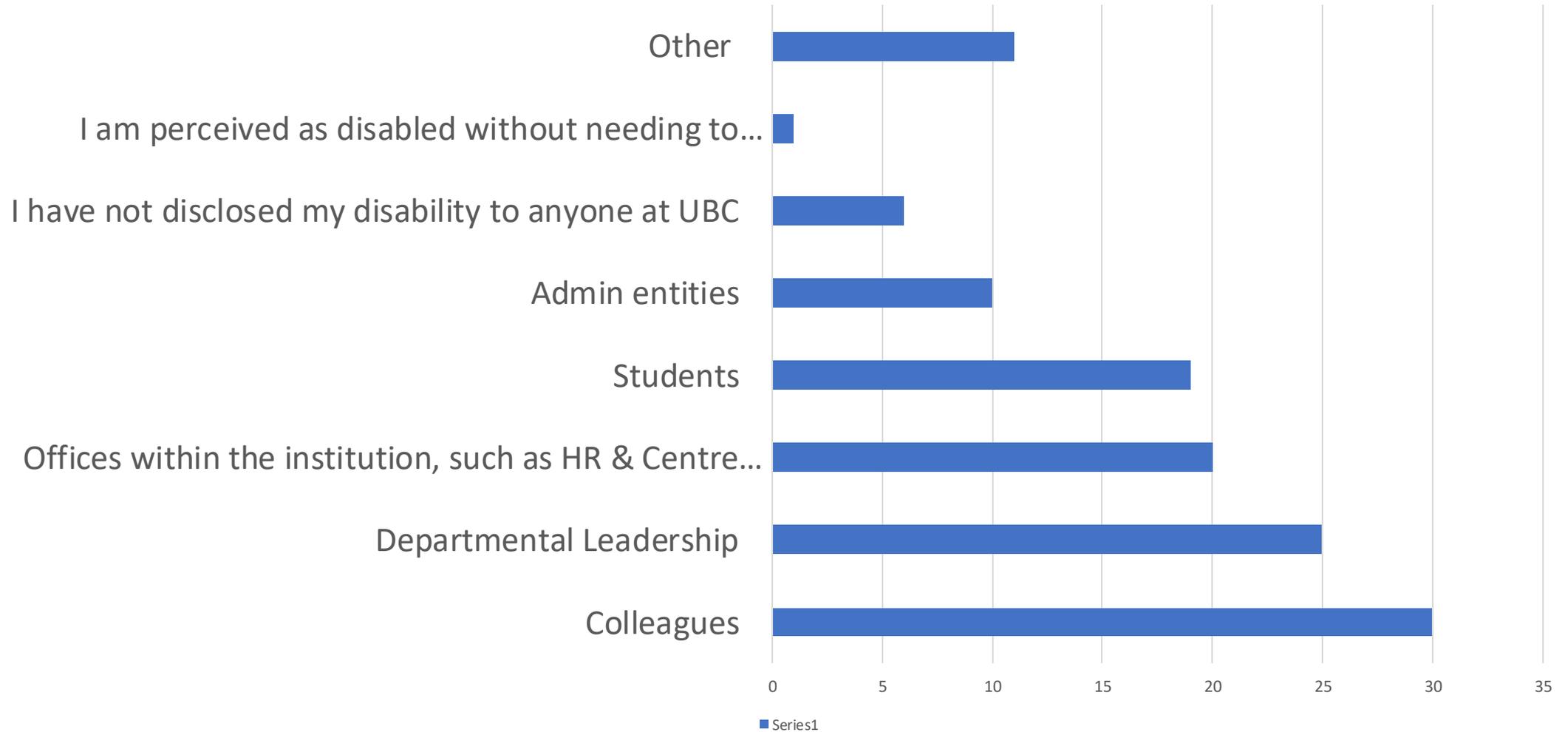
Q7: Respondent Rank (N=44)



Q9: How would you characterize your condition(s) or impairment(s)? (N=44)



Q10. Have you disclosed your disability status to any of the following? (Multiple answers)



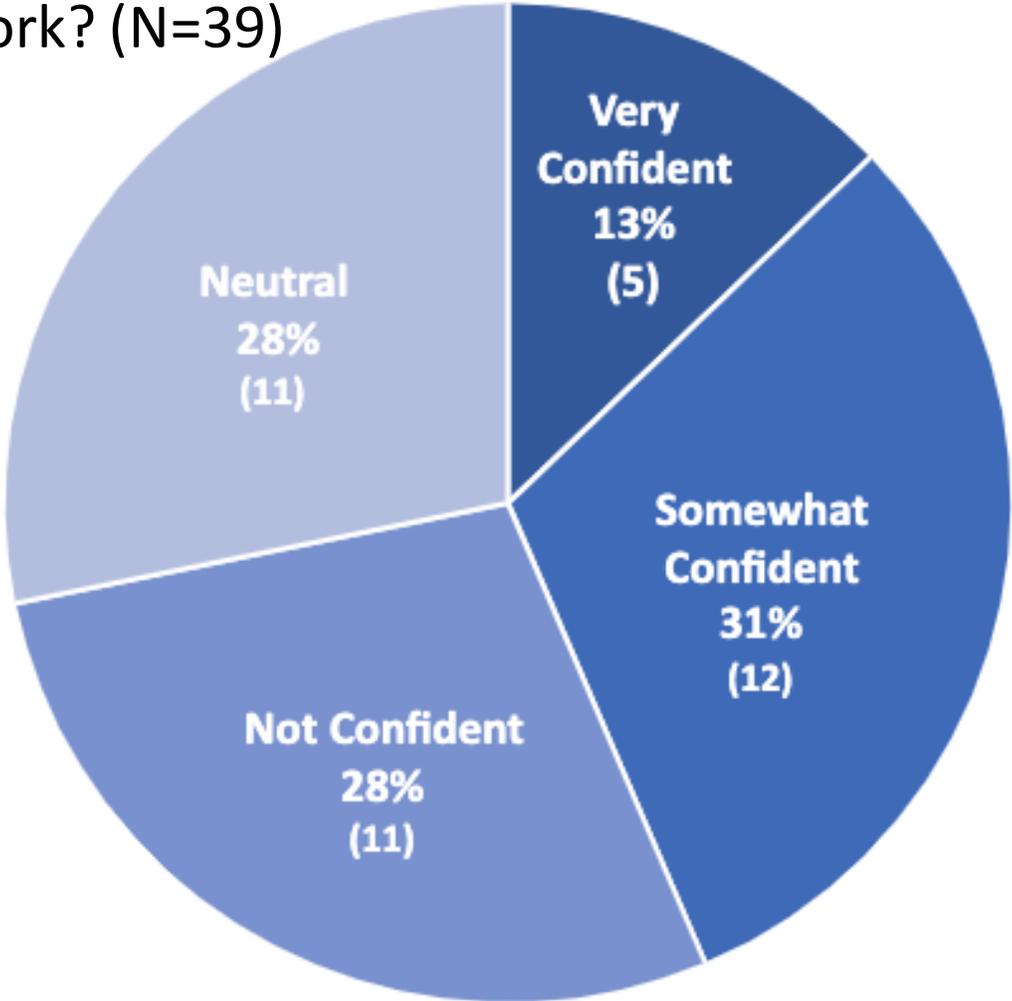
Disclosure (open-ended)

- "My early career experiences in the 2000s generally deterred me from disclosing disability. Graduate advisors explicitly told me not to do so."
- "My main concern [with disclosing] was perception of disability as a stigma of a problem or troubled employee."
- "I did not disclose prior to tenure."
- "I'm also hesitant to share this with colleagues in my discipline as I've shared other sensitive material and faced discrimination or been passed over for opportunities."
- "I think there needs to be more attention to how people move in and out of disability, or how disabilities and needs change."

Impacts on instruction (open-ended)

- "Mostly it impacts... other areas of life, during intense times fatigue during work leave little energy to family and personal life."
- "My anxiety makes it so that I go over student papers more carefully--and more often--than I normally would."
- "UBC is a radically ableist campus, designed only for people who can walk or ride a bike."
- "The sheer amount of work is ridiculous when someone has cognitive disabilities. I can do an excellent job, but it means I work 7 days a week, every week."
- [Teaching evaluation] is "incredibly biased and often contain inappropriate comments from students about my gender and disability that impact both the written comments and the overall evaluation scores. I frequently encounter student comments in evaluations that if said in person would constitute bullying and harassment."

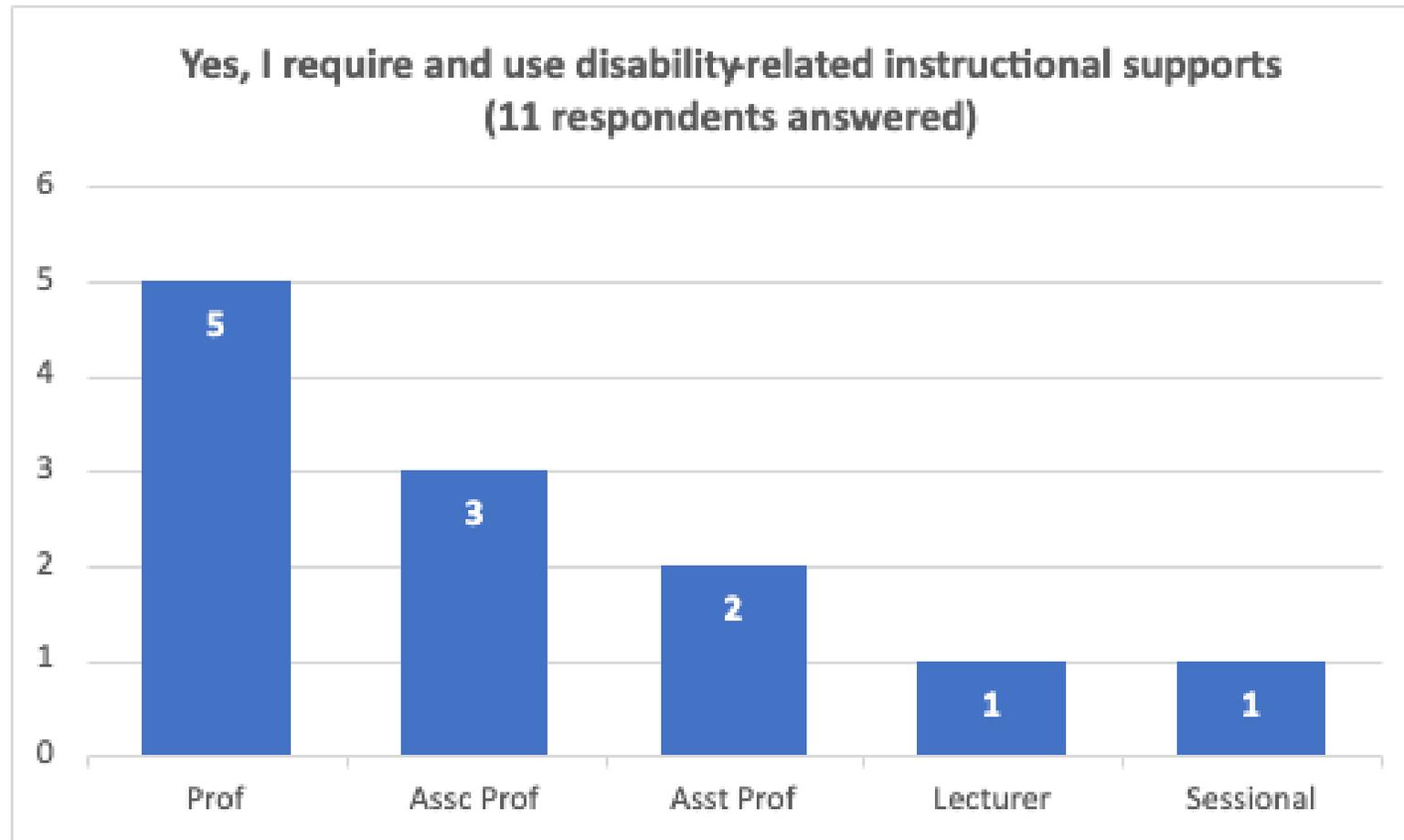
Q15: How confident are you in identifying necessary supports to enable your work? (N=39)



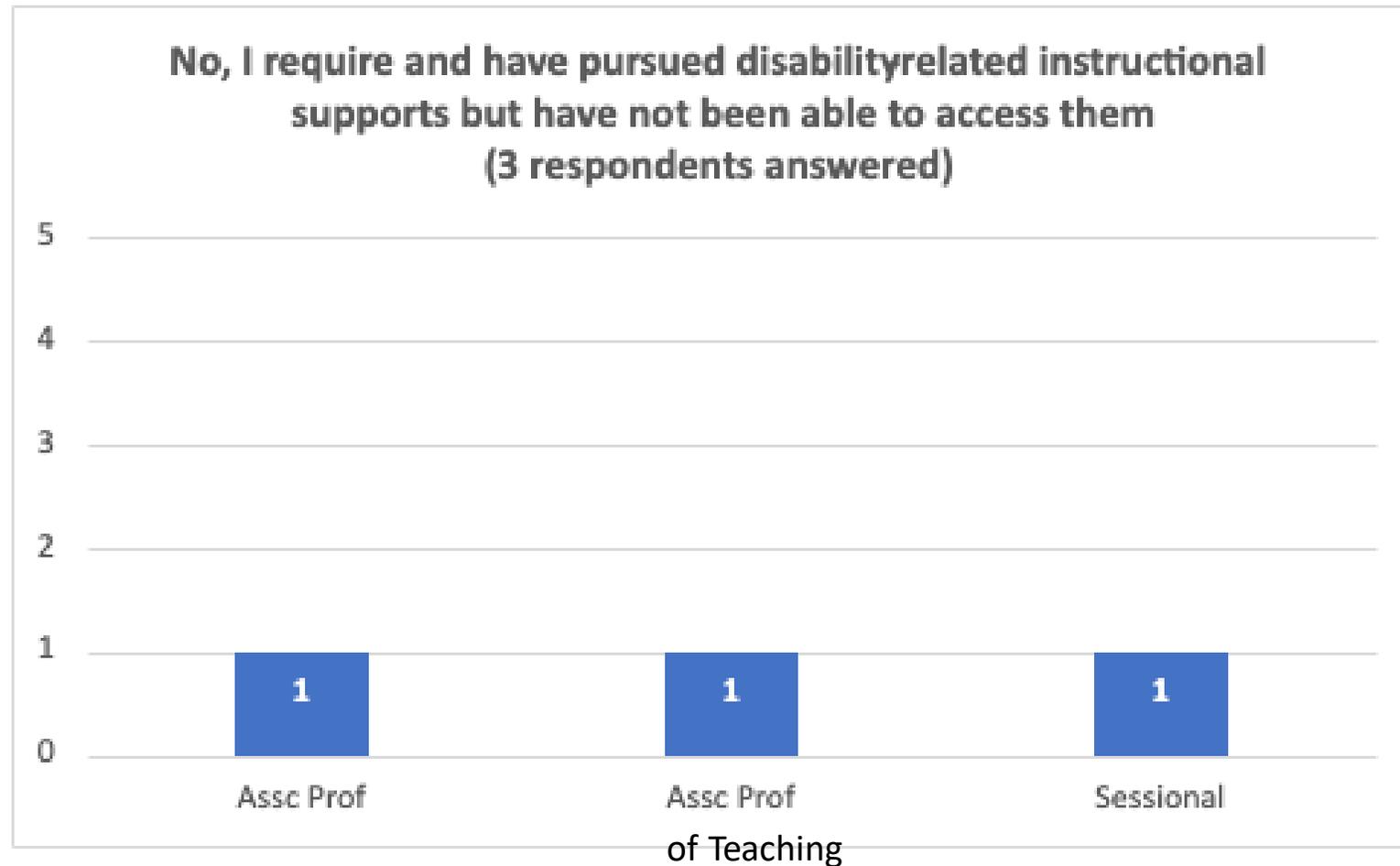
Q:16 In the context of disability, do you currently use any disability-related instructional supports? (n=41)

- 12 (29%) answered, "Yes, I require and use disability-related instructional supports"
- 3 (7%) answered, "No, I require and have pursued disability-related instructional supports but have not been able to access them"
- 16 (39%) answered, "No, I require disability-related instructional supports but have not pursued them"
- 10 (24%) answered, "No, I do not require any disability-related instructional support"

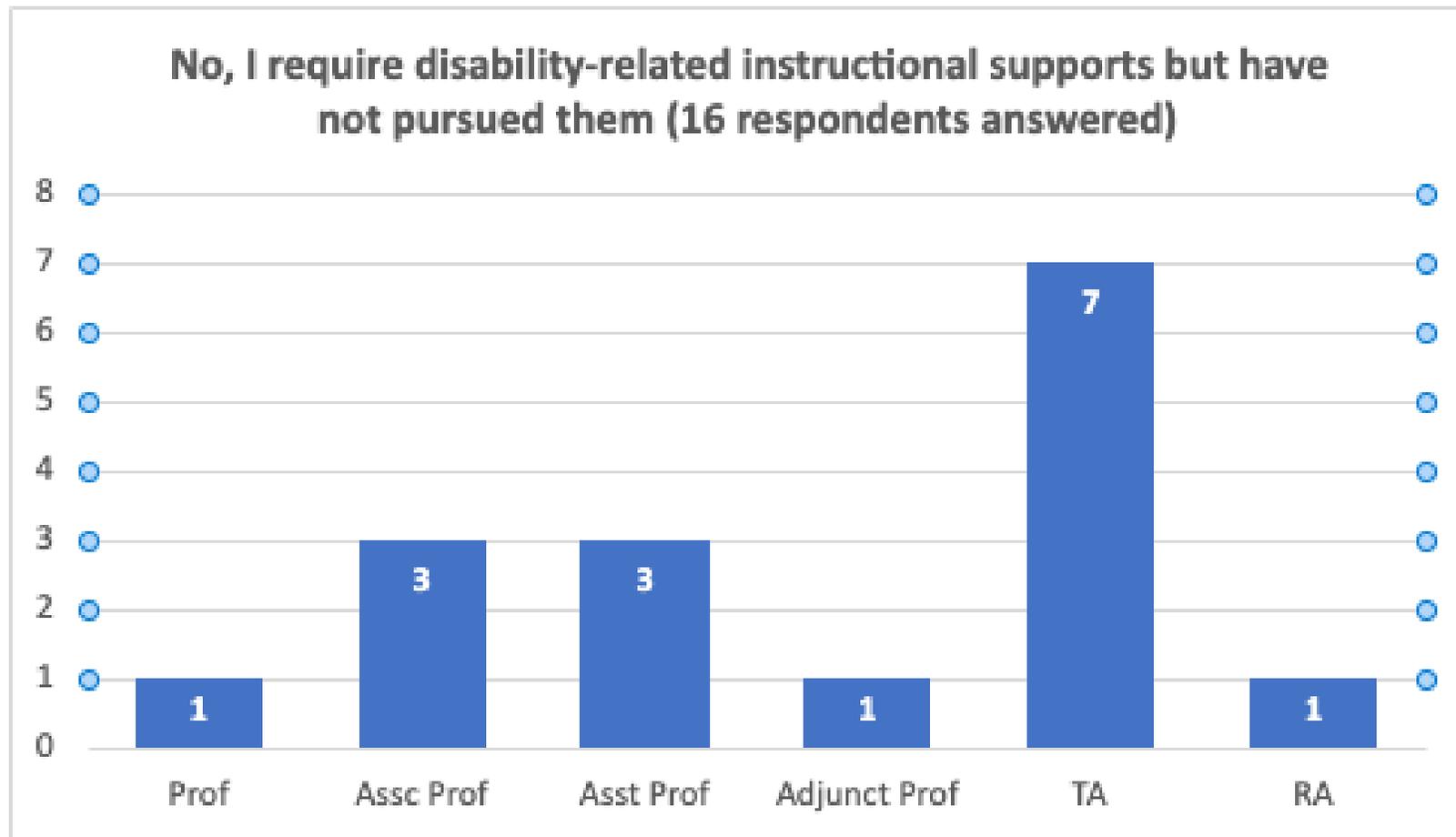
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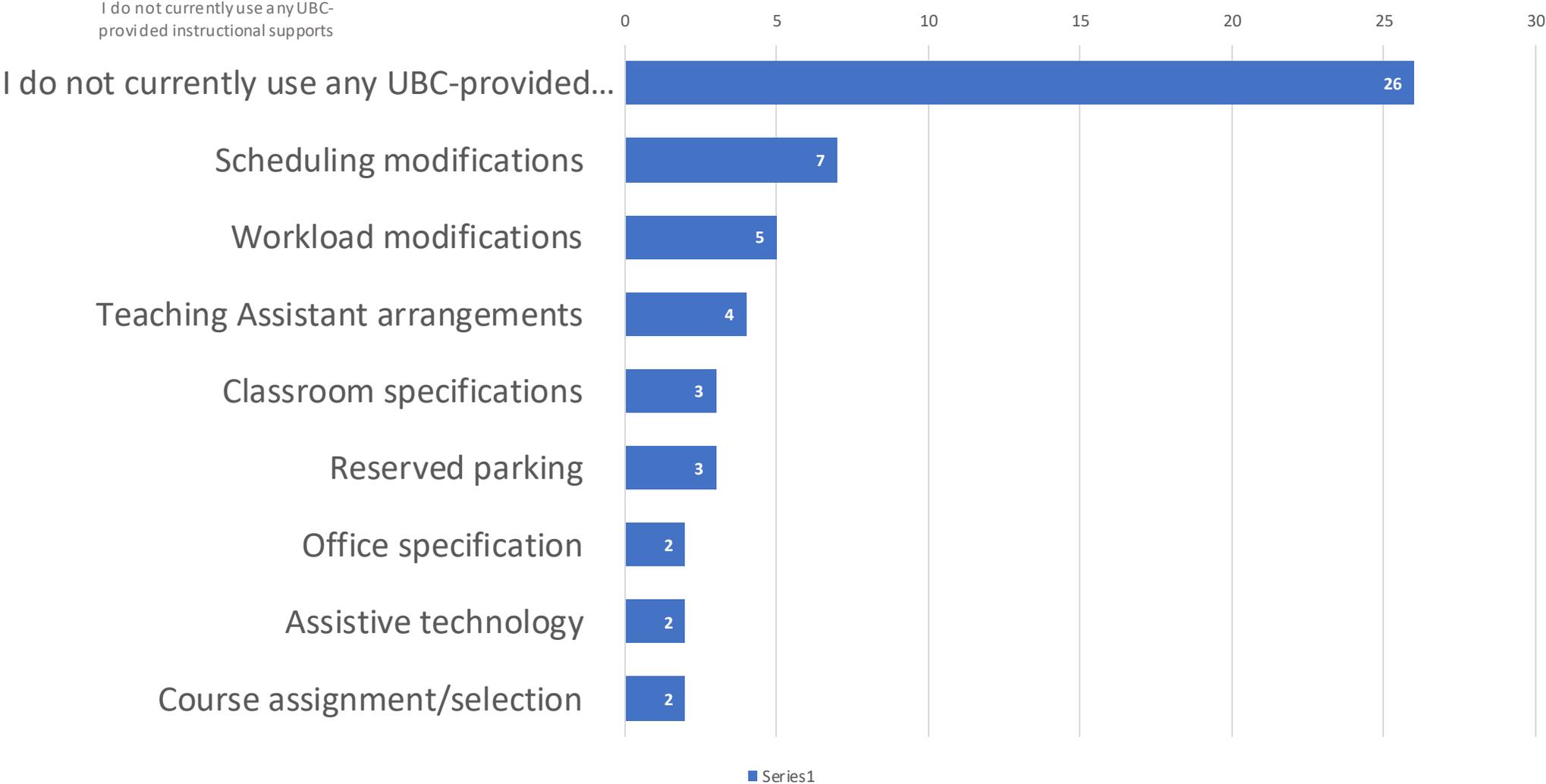
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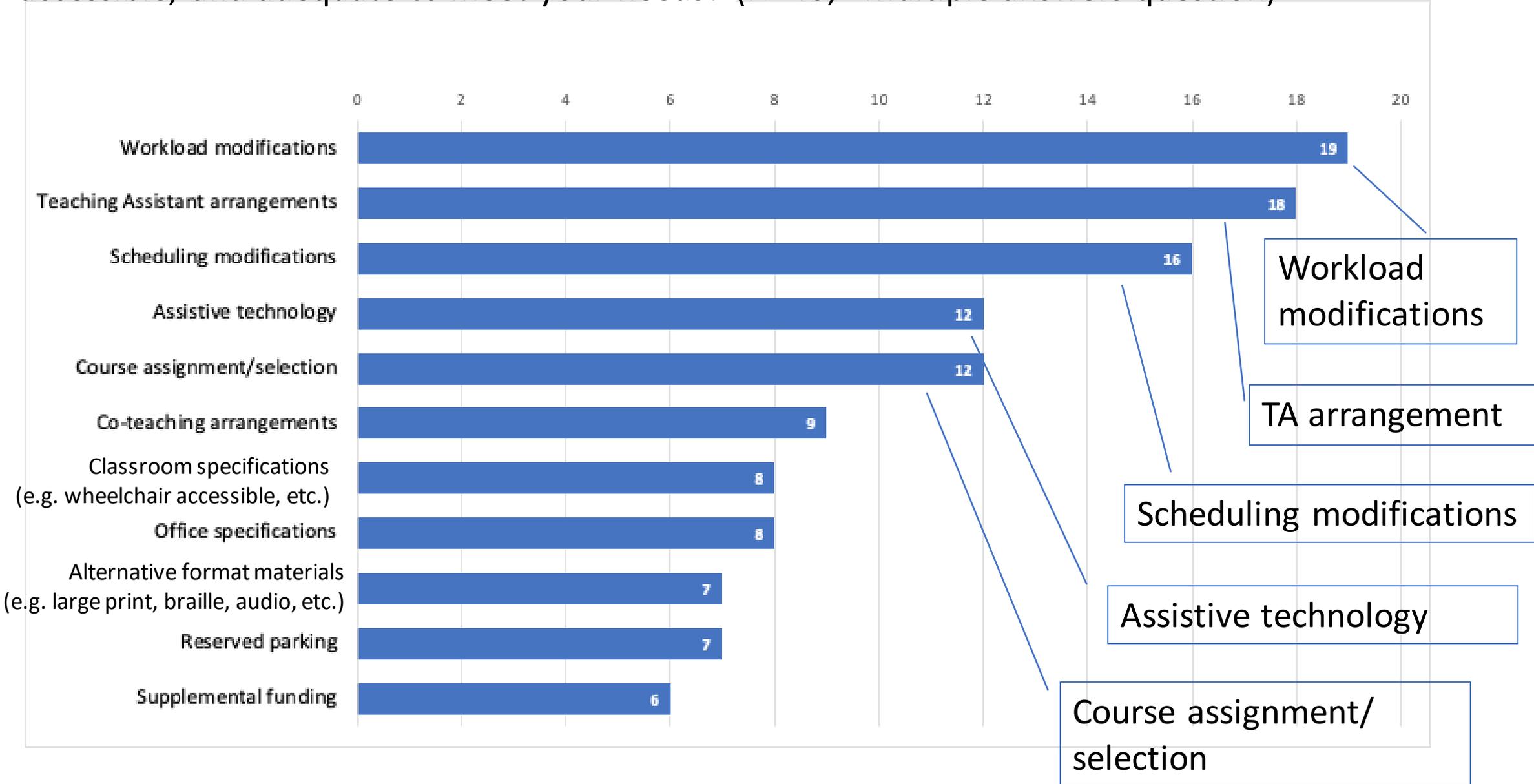
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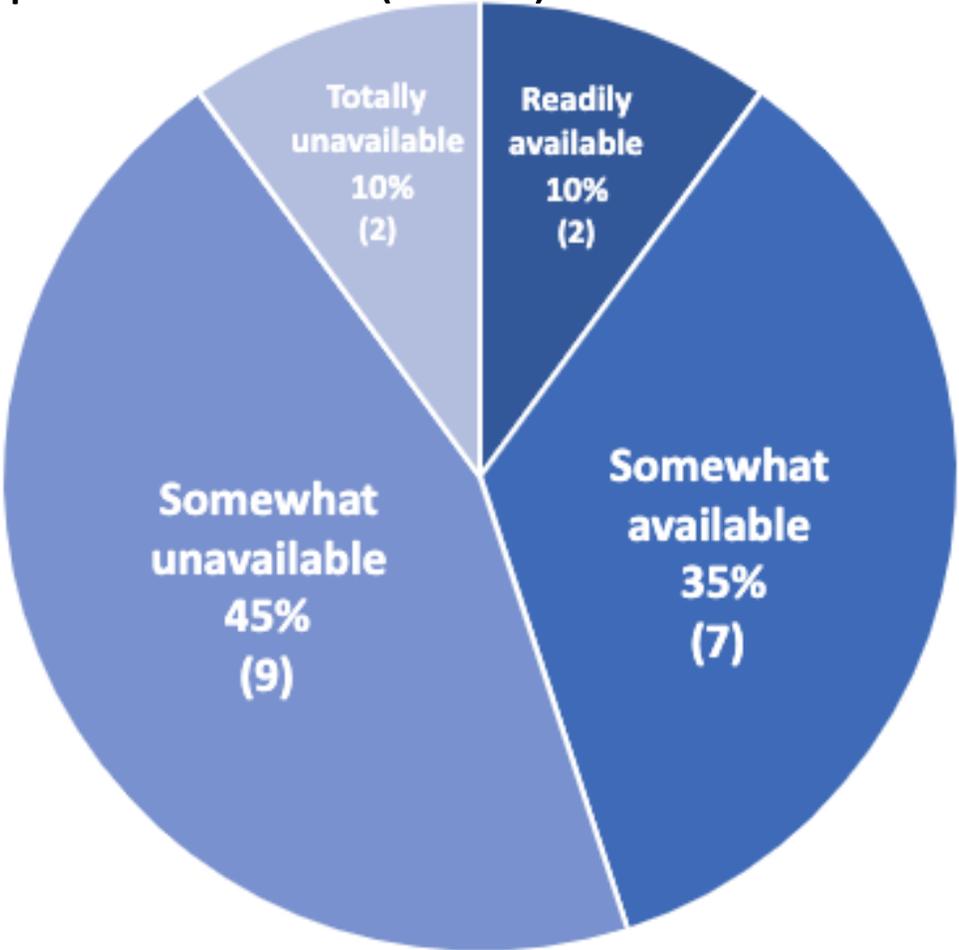
Q18: Which of UBC-provided instructional supports do you currently use? (N=39)



Q19: Which of the UBC-Provided instructional supports would you use if they were available, accessible, and adequate to meet your needs? (N=40, *Multiple answers question)

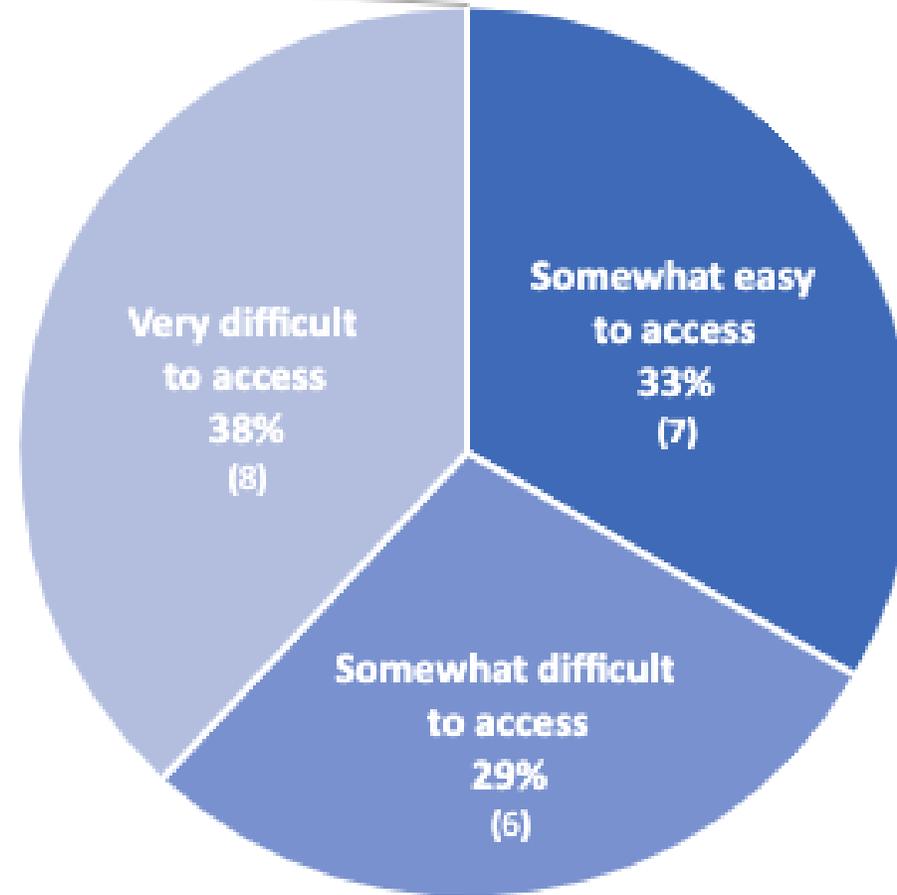


Q20: How would you rate the availability of disability-related instructional supports at UBC? (N=20)

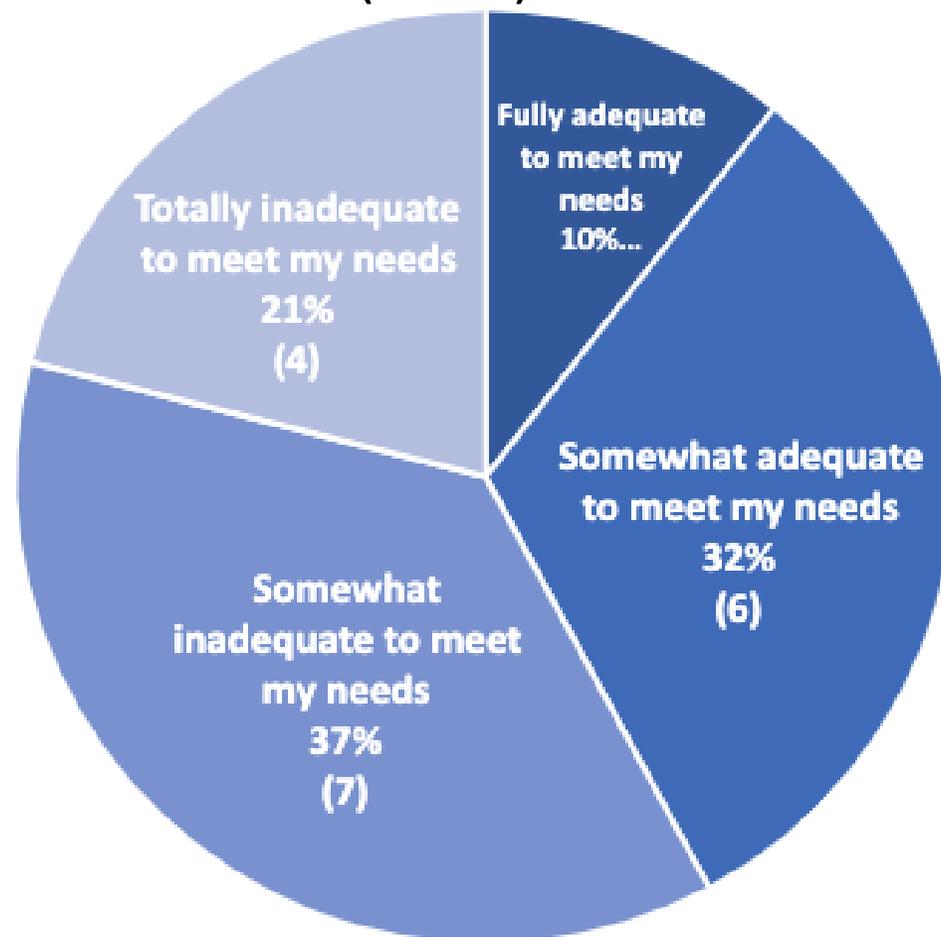


Q21: How would you rate the accessibility (ease of access) of disability-related instructional supports at UBC? (N=21)

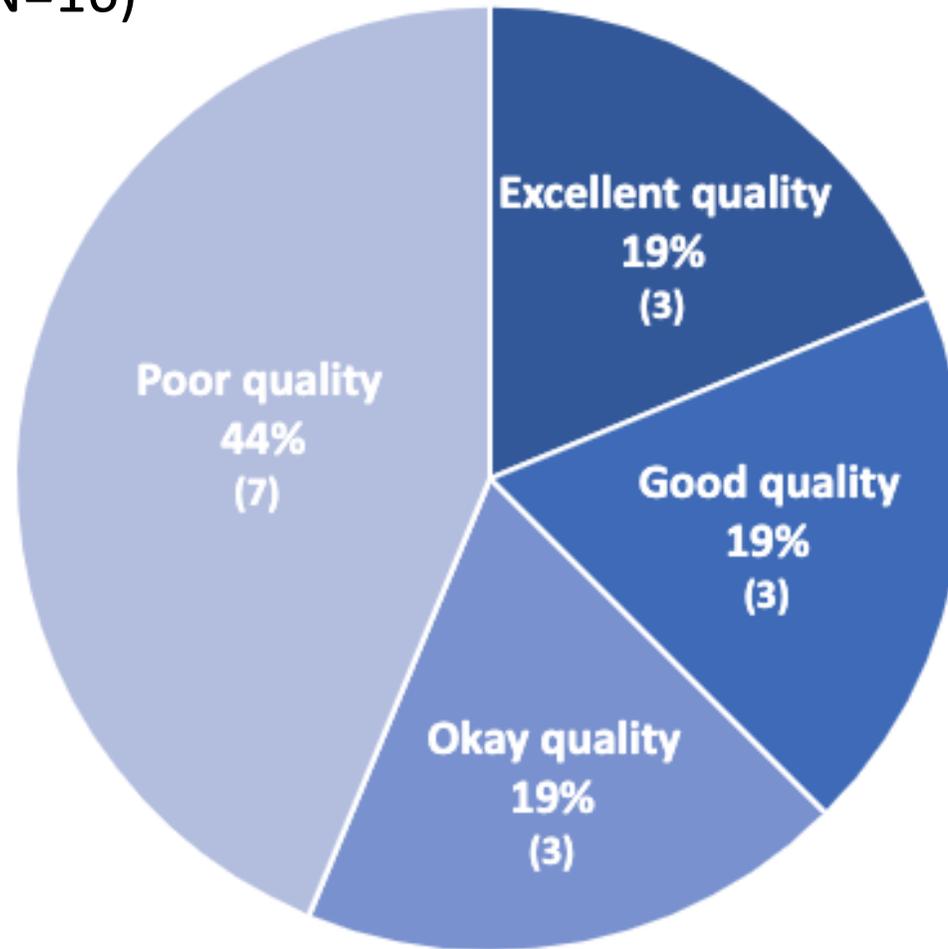
Very easy to access, 0%
(0)



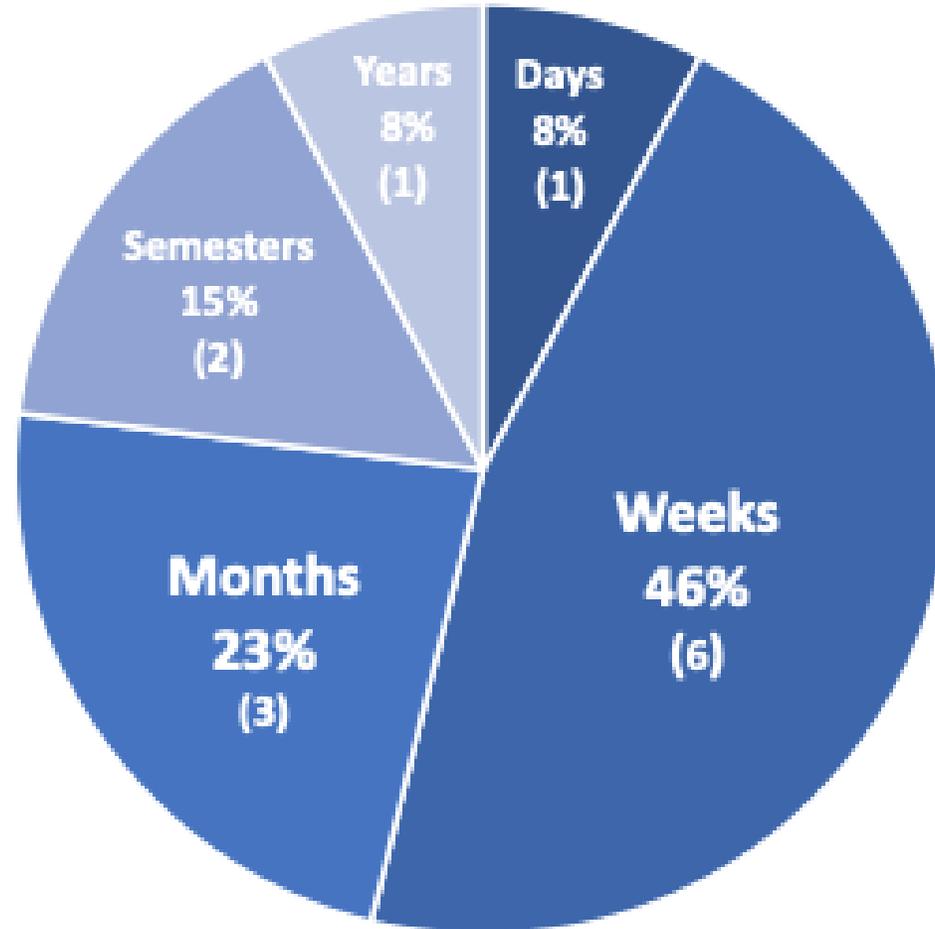
Q22: How would you rate the adequacy of disability-related instructional supports at UBC? (N=19)



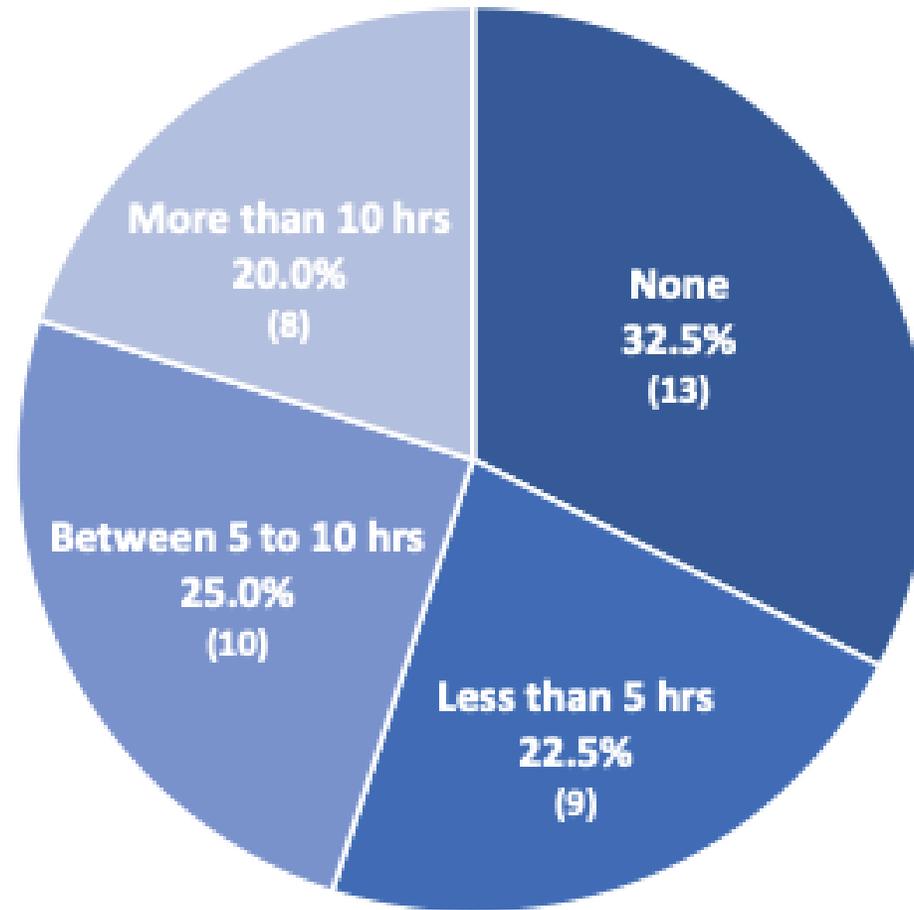
Q23: How would you rate the quality of disability-related instructional supports at UBC? (N=16)



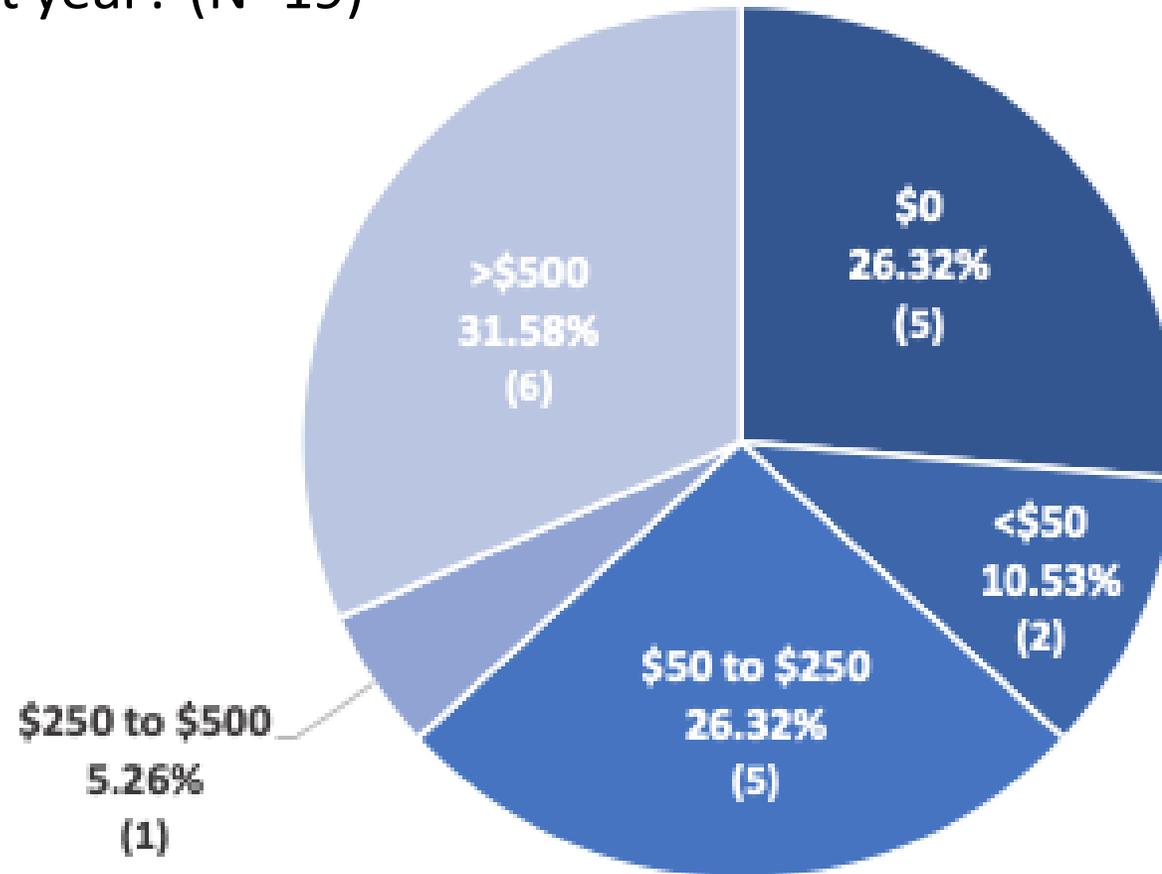
In your experience, what is the average timeline for receiving disability-related instructional supports at UBC? (N=13)



Q26: How many hours per week, on average, do you estimate that you spend doing labour to compensate for the availability, accessibility, adequacy, and/or quality of needed UBC-provided instructional supports? (N=40)



Q25-a: How much money would you estimate that you've spent out-of-pocket providing disability-related instructional supports for yourself in the past year? (N=19)



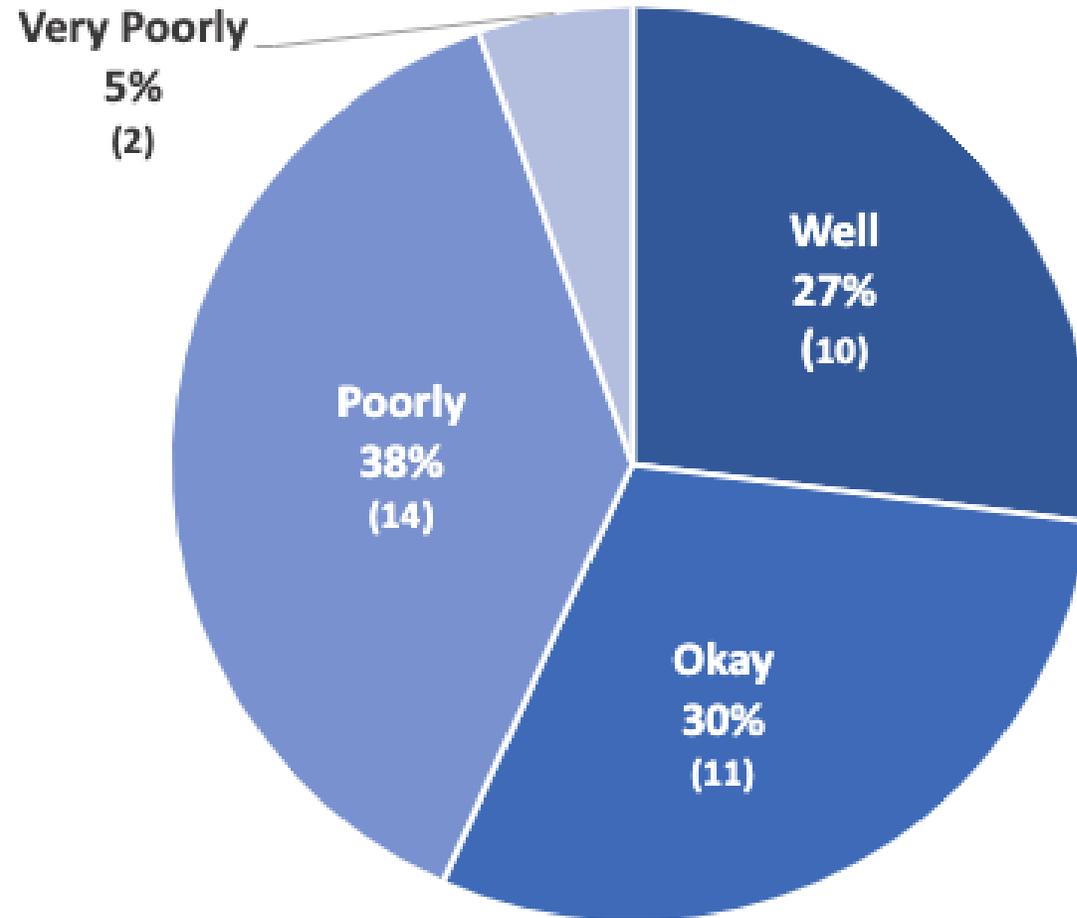
USB's instructional support (open-ended)

- [Supports] "are incredibly hard to access and frequently change with department leadership -- I often have to renegotiate accommodations and resupply documentation every year. The process and pathways for accessing accommodations varies with departments and is opaque. What accommodations are even possible is unclear and often very difficult to negotiate and implement, taking months or even more than a year to put in place, and then challenged each semester."
- "Much depends upon the head of unit; the head of our unit at the moment is a warm, empathetic, responsible person. If she were not, things might not be going so well for me. It would be good to see a system that would work well for disabled people no matter who the head of unit is. I used to have an informal arrangement with my department about scheduling, but the current administration stopped respecting that arrangement, so I had to go to HR and 'officialise' my accommodation."

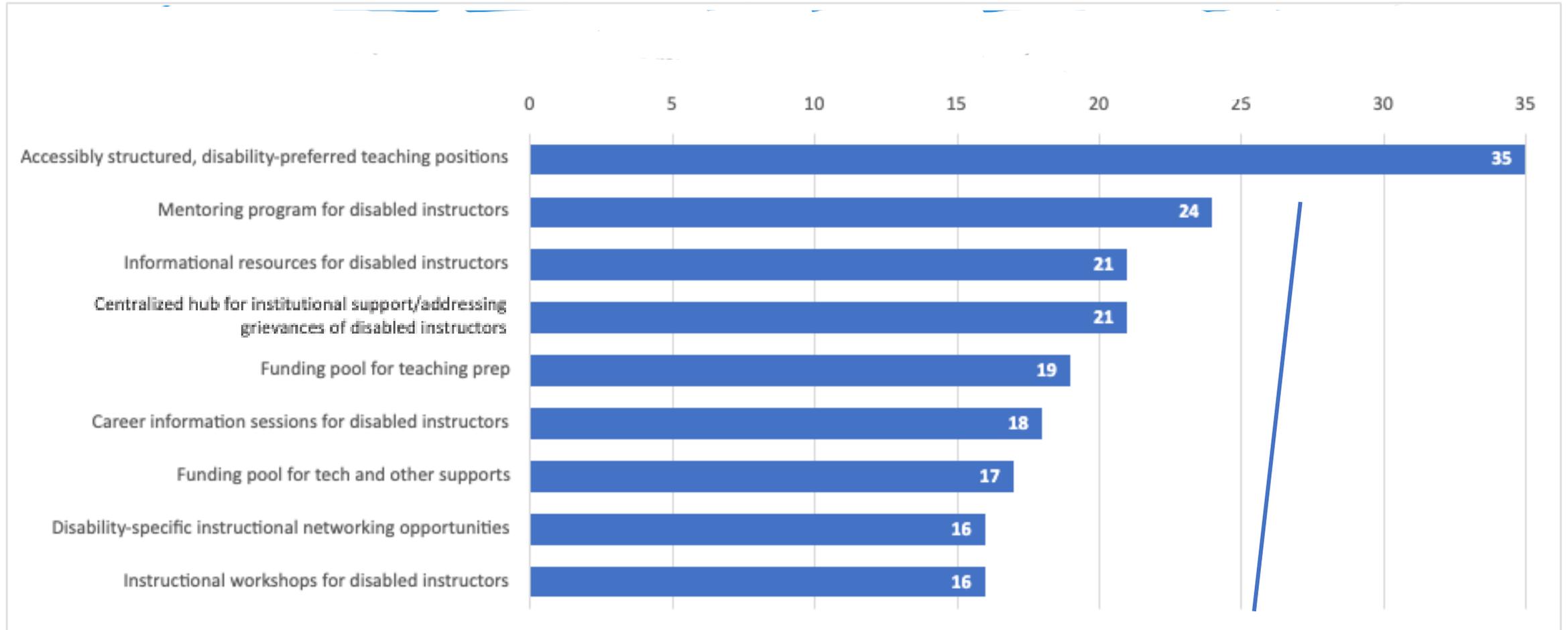
USB's instructional support (open-ended)

- "I have been fortunate to not have any significant flare-ups or serious complications since arriving at UBC. I do believe that if I had, I would not be supported and would be forced to take a leave of absence."
- "My disability is not always present in terms of clear or distinct physical symptoms; however, the emotional and bodily toll adds up in the academic setting."
- "I have many [strategies] -- I have always needed to strategize around my learning and teaching needs. The context is always slightly different depending on the course, class set-up, work load and inclusion of TA(s). Unfortunately, I have had to learn how to self-accommodate."

Q30: Overall, how well or poorly does UBC support the professional development of disabled instructors? (N=37)

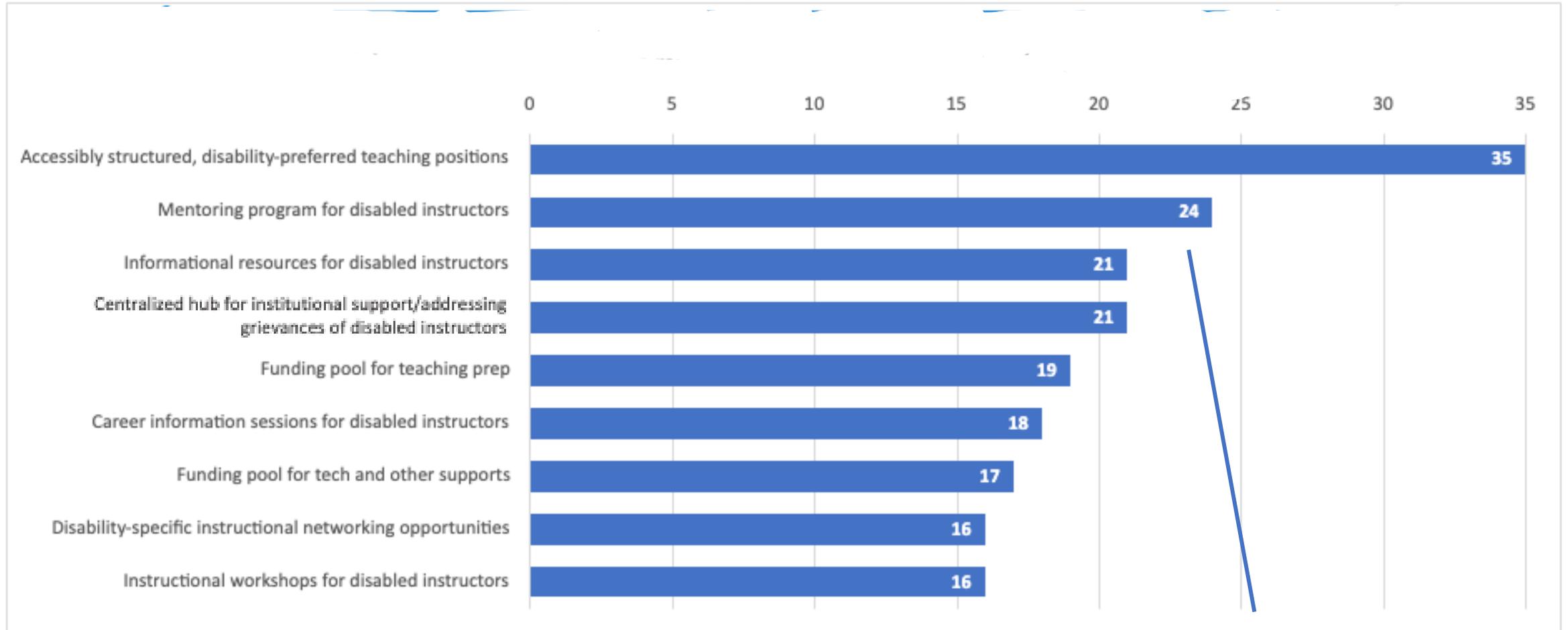


Q29: In the context of disability, which of the following PD resources or programming for disabled instructors would you be likely to use if they were available?



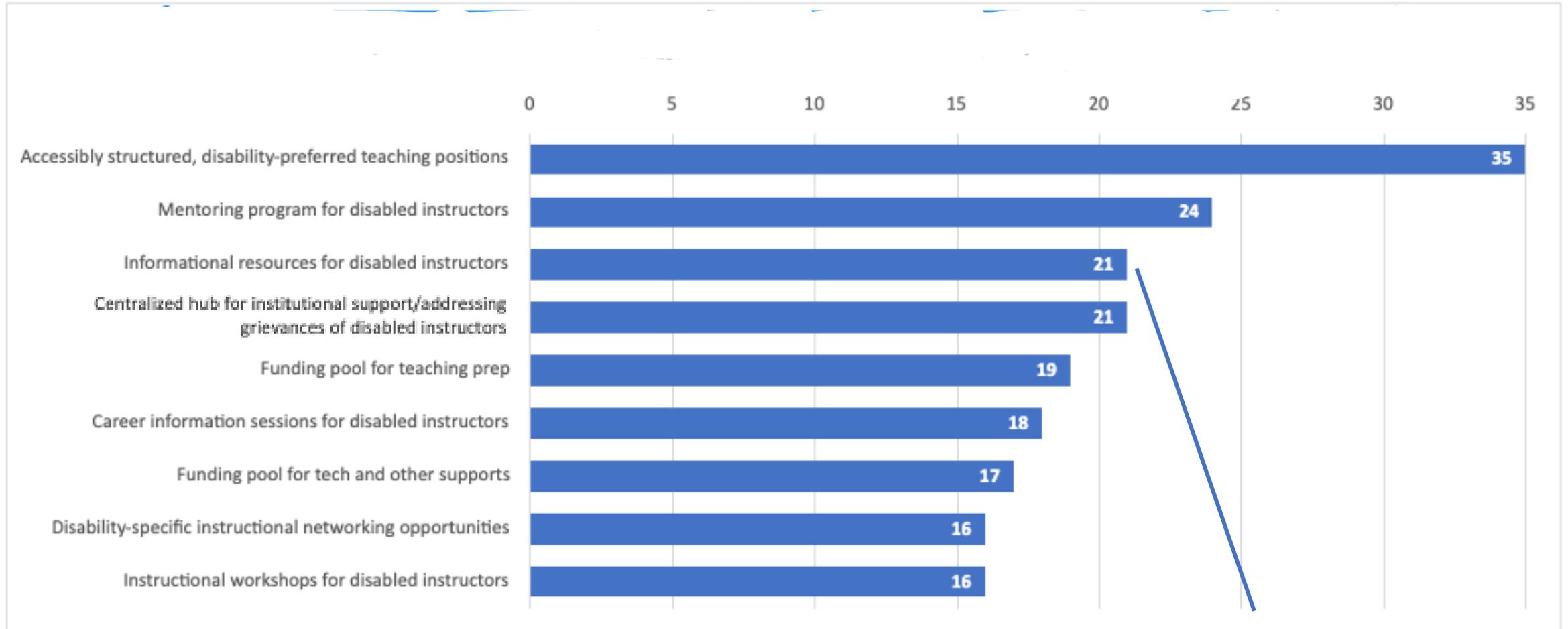
Accessibility structured, disability-preferred teaching positions

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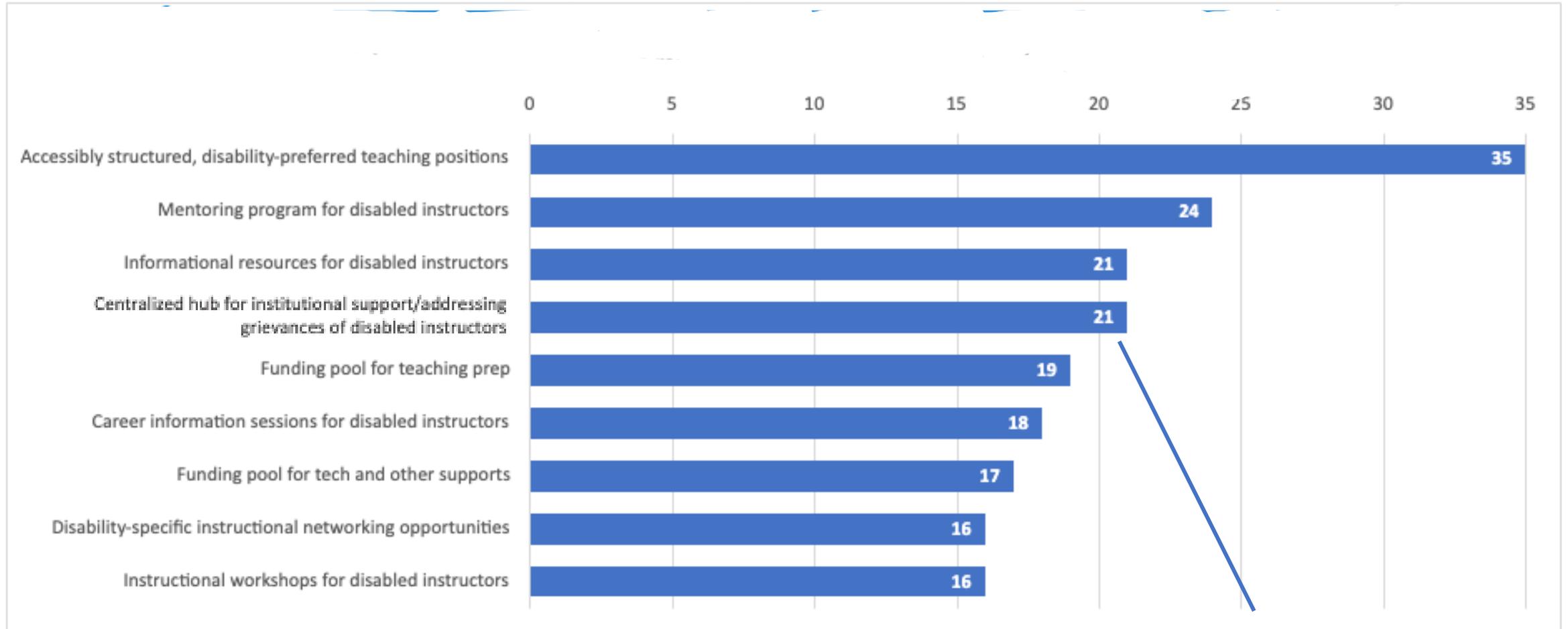
Mentoring program for disabled instructors

Q29: In the context of disability, which of the following PD resources or programming for disabled instructors would you be likely to use if they were available?



Informational resources for disabled instructors

Q29: In the context of disability, which of the following PD resources or programming for disabled instructors would you be likely to use if they were available?



Central hub for institutional support/addressing grievances of disabled instructors

Professional development (open-ended)

- "Precarious employment, inconsistent access to extended medical benefits, lack of access to avenues for promotion and advancement, and inability to safely access medical leave or workload accommodations without jeopardizing contract renewals all add to the difficulties and insecurities of being a disabled contract faculty member at UBC."

Key Findings

1. Disclosure remains challenging
2. UBC's instructional supports are unavailable, difficult to access, inadequate to meet disabled instructors' needs and poor quality
3. Access to supports is contingent on the current departmental leadership
4. UBC does not adequately provide PD programs and resources for disabled instructors

Recommendations

1. Normalize discussions of disabilities, assume the presence of disabled instructors, and plan for accessibility
2. Promote available supports and resources for disabled instructors
3. Create barrier-free, individualized, centrally funded (instructional) supports
4. Clearly define institutional responsibilities and pathways; hold all levels accountable for legal obligations around accommodation
5. Create mentorship and networking opportunities among disabled instructors